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ABSTRACT

In 1990, pursuant to the Washington community college system's request, the Washington state legislature appropriated additional funding to pursue assessment at the local college level as a way to address issues of institutional improvement. Each college submitted preliminary plans to the State Board for Community College Education (SBCCE) which gave the colleges feedback about their plans, providing suggestions for revisions and improvements where appropriate. Colleges were asked to follow a particular format in their final plans, addressing a series of questions designed to elicit a full and accurate picture of their 1990-91 assessment process. This report presents a compilation and summary of the assessment plans of all 27 colleges in the system. Each summary provides assessment liaison(s), and his/her phone number; a brief overview of self-defined highlights of the assessment plan; a listing of the broad goals, major activities, and significant questions being addressed in the current year; an indication of currently planned data collection efforts for 1990-91 not described earlier in the summary; and a description of the faculty development activities underway or planned as part of the overall assessment efforts. Appendixes provide 1990-91 guidelines for the institutional assessment of student learning, including a selected bibliography of 25 references; guidelines for the institutional assessment plans; and a fall 1990 status report on assessment incentive grant projects. (JMC)

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Operations Research
No. 91-2

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The Washington Community College

Institutional Outcomes Assessment Plans

An Overview and Summary

February 1991

Loretta Seppanen

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THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLANS:
AN OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY
February, 1991

Background

In the 1990 session, responding to the community college system's request for funding to pursue assessment at the local college level as a way to address issues of institutional improvement, the Washington legislature appropriated an additional 1.62 million dollars for 1990-91--$60,000 per college--beyond the original $400,000 appropriated for the overall system outcomes assessment efforts. Based on guidelines (Appendix A) provided by the Outcomes Task Force of the Washington Association of Community Colleges (WACC), each community college has been asked to develop plans for the use of this assessment allocation in 1990-91.

College submitted preliminary plans to the State Board for Community College Education in mid-June, and SBCCE gave each college feedback about their plan, with suggestions for revisions and improvements where appropriate. The Board asked colleges to submit their final 1990-1991 assessment plan by November 15, to allow additional time for campus review and input, particularly from faculty. This report represents a compilation and summary of these assessment plans from all 27 of the Washington community colleges. In a few cases, colleges have not completely finalized their assessment plans; in virtually all cases, these plans portray a "snapshot" of the status of institutional outcomes assessment activities and plans as of November, 1990.

Because this year is the first time that most of the colleges have formally addressed assessment issues in this way, with additional funding, readers should view this "snapshot" as open to change. Nevertheless, this portrait reflects a significant level of activity and enthusiasm with respect to outcomes assessment. Regardless of how the specific details may evolve over time, the fact that colleges have established a commitment to assessment as an ongoing process bodes well for meaningful and positive institutional change in community colleges in the coming years. In that respect, it seems clear from a review of these plans that the statewide assessment initiative represented by this allocation to individual community colleges has already been successful in terms of sparking critical discussions and raising important questions about student learning. Realistically, however, colleges will need to sustain the momentum over some time for the assessment effort to have a broad impact on student learning at the campus level.

Overview of Institutional Assessment Plans

The overall assessment guidelines provided to the colleges were broadly defined, in part to acknowledge and celebrate the variety of colleges and perspectives represented in the Washington system. What was encouraged, though, and what the plans in fact reflect, is a consistent and fundamental concern with assessment as a framework for thinking about **student learning** and related curriculum issues. Within that broad framework, four themes emerge from the activities described in these assessment plans:

*** Assessing student learning**
The colleges are generally placing a greater emphasis on the need for thoughtful planning and consensus-building about what assessment means and what their learning outcomes and goals are rather than specific and immediate data-collection projects. At the same time, colleges are clearly encouraging a variety of small-scale data-gathering efforts both as a way to begin clarifying overall perceptions of student learning and to involve as many different people in the assessment effort as possible. These projects cover a wide range of issues and disciplines, focusing on all three levels of assessment--**classroom, program,** and **institution** . Almost half of the colleges have some degree of classroom-based research activities underway, and most of those colleges have either sponsored or planned specific workshops on the topic for their faculty. At least ten colleges plan to review and assess their general education curriculum, most frequently with data collection projects in writing and computation skills. In the specific area of writing, eleven colleges have some version of a portfolio project underway or planned. Other popular focus areas: developmental education (seven colleges) and interdisciplinary or coordinated studies (four colleges).

*** Developing local expertise in assessment**
Virtually all of the colleges have completed or plan to offer some form of faculty/professional development activity related specifically to assessment completed or planned, ranging from simple on-campus presentations on the topic to major off-campus retreats (e.g., Edmonds, Peninsula, North Seattle). The efforts completed to date have been fairly successful in introducing faculty and staff to major assessment issues and concerns, and in initiating continuing conversations on the campuses about these issues. Many colleges are also sending various faculty and assessment coordinators to conferences and training workshops, as well as on-site visits to other campuses with well-established, model outcomes assessment programs.

Potentially even more significant in terms of long-range benefits to the college is that most institutions are compiling resource libraries of assessment-related material to be available for faculty and staff involved in assessment projects. While the State Board plans to continue to forge a statewide network of people involved in assessment, these efforts related to building local expertise and resources are critical to the ongoing success of college-level projects.

*** Generating faculty involvement**

The workshops and mini-conferences mentioned above represent one significant approach to generating faculty involvement. Additionally, at least fifteen of the colleges are allocating some portion of their funds to small-scale assessment projects proposed by individual faculty members and/or departments. The projects funded to date represent faculty from all curriculum areas, including a substantial number of occupational program faculty. These mini-grant processes generate faculty interest in pursuing a variety of assessment efforts, with faculty raising important questions about student learning.

*** Sustaining collegewide interest in assessment-related issues**

Most of the colleges are giving at least some thought to how, and how much, they can maintain the visibility of assessment activities, discussions, and issues on their campuses. Nine colleges already have some kind of formal information-sharing effort in place, most frequently in-house newsletters. Several schools are also addressing this issue by scheduling informal faculty discussions on assessment concerns, conducting faculty forums or periodic seminars on specific assessment-related topics, and planning publications (even a video!) designed to summarize assessment activities and/or results--for example, an anthology of student writing from a portfolio project.

Institutional Outcomes Assessment Activities: Initiating the Conversation

In sum, there is a tremendous variety of activity going on around the community college system in the name of outcomes assessment, indicating the level of seriousness with which the institutions are taking the notion of assessment and the level of understanding of the potential for positive change as a result of these efforts. It is much too early to point to tangible data and results as clear evidence for the value of the overall agenda. However, from these plans as well as conversations with faculty and staff around the state there is already evidence of a significant change in the quantity and quality of college conversations about the fundamental educational questions at the heart of assessment: what do community colleges want students to know and be able to do, and how can colleges help students demonstrate these achievements? Given some time to germinate, those questions, the accompanying conversations, and the related data-gathering will help move colleges toward change and educational improvement.

Additional Summary Information

Assessment Activity Highlights

The table on the following page displays an overview of assessment activities in the community college system across six major kinds of activity areas:

General Education Outcomes
An indication of whether or not the college has chosen to make its general education course sequence a particular focus area for assessment

Classroom Research
A listing of whether the college is including this specific approach to assessment, emphasizing informal methods of collecting information on students and their learning; most frequently used by individual faculty members with respect to specific courses

Writing Portfolio
An indication of whether or the college is piloting some kind of writing portfolio project, usually defined as the compilation and secondary analysis of a sample of students' writing assignments, etc. over a specified period of time to gain a broader understanding of overall progress in writing skills; can be adapted to other topics

Transcript studies
A listing of whether, and in what way, the college is attempting to address outcomes assessment questions by using information available from its own student database

Newsletter
An indication of whether or not the college is currently producing an internal newsletter or some other form of information sharing to all faculty related to its assessment efforts

The table depicts a generally high level of assessment activity in these critical areas, which roughly represent the two broad dimensions of 1) faculty-level and 2) institutional-level assessment efforts. 19 of the colleges are funding small-scale faculty-initiated projects, indicating some success in encouraging a broad range of faculty involvement. 15 colleges are actively taking faculty involvement a step further by focusing specifically on classroom-based research efforts in a formal way, while 12 are involved in some kind of faculty-driven project related to student writing portfolios. With respect to institutional-level assessment, almost half the system (14 colleges) are pursuing or considering an intentional focus on general education as a major part of outcomes assessment, suggesting an institutional commitment to a broad-based level of student learning outcomes. The level of interest in transcript or tracking studies--12 colleges definitely involved in such work, 7 others considering it--provides further evidence of a keen institutional-level interest in student outcomes to complement the faculty interest reflected in the earlier items. Finally, 11 colleges are keeping the campus community informed and up-to-date on assessment activities through the use of an informal newsletter; at several other schools, the information-sharing takes the form of open faculty meetings or regular forums rather than a newsletter. The overall commitment to communicating internally to faculty, staff and students thus seems substantial.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES IN SIX MAJOR AREAS OF INTEREST, 1990-1991

COLLEGE	FACULTY PROJECTS	GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES	CLASSROOM RESEARCH	WRITING PORTFOLIO	TRANSCRIPT STUDIES	NEWS-LETTER
Bellevue	X	X	X	X	X	
Big Bend	X		X		X	
Centralia	X				X	X
Clark	X		X		X	
Columbia Basin	X	X	X		O	X
Edmonds	X	O	X	X		X
Everett	X	O	X	O		O
Grays Harbor	X				O	
Green River						
Highline	X					
Lower Columbia	X	X	X	X	X	
N. Seattle	X	X	O		X	X
Olympic	X			X	X	
Peninsula	X				X	X
Pierce	O		X		X	
S. Puget Sound		X	X			
S. Seattle						
Seattle Central		X	X	X	X	
Shoreline	X	X	X	X	X	X
Skagit Valley	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spokane		X	X	X	O	X
Spokane Falls	X		X	X	X	X
Tacoma	X	X	X	X	O	
Walla Walla	X				O	
Wenatchee Valley	X	X	X	X	O	X
Whatcom	X	O	X			
Yakima Valley				X	O	X

NOTES:
X : specific project or activity planned
O : possibility of project in this area; activities under consideration or likely based on nature of focus areas presented in the assessment plan

FACULTY PROJECTS: Specific funding set aside for faculty-initiated "mini-grant" projects
TRANSCRIPT STUDIES: Student tracking study of some kind, generally involving the use of existing student database information-often, but not always, student transcript file information

Information drawn from institutional assessment plans submitted to the State Board for Community College Education November, 1990

Budget Overview

Given the emphasis the statewide effort has put on the critical need for strong faculty direction of and involvement in the assessment process at the campus level, it is very encouraging to see that over half of the money system-wide--considering the salaries/benefits figure, the number of faculty serving as coordinators, and the money invested in small-scale project funding--is going into direct support for faculty involved in assessment activities, as shown in Table 2. Moreover, the 15% committed to staff development also significantly reflects the emphasis for this initial year on faculty development and acquiring local expertise in the area of assessment.

TABLE 2
Institutional Assessment Budgets
Summary of Planned Expenditure

Category	Expenditures	% of Total
Salaries and Benefits		
Faculty	$710,748	46%
Other Staff	371,830	24%
Staff Development	241,009	15%
Goods and Services	92,092	6%
Other	144,121	9%
Total	$1,559,800	100%

(Figures reflect the 26 colleges with budgets currently submitted)

Faculty salaries and benefits include funds to pay replacement cost of faculty released to serve on the steering committee, conduct outcomes research, and attend conferences, as well as stipends for the same purposes. At some colleges the liaison coordinator is a faculty person and some portion of the salary is funded.

Other staff salaries and benefits includes partial funding for the assessment coordinator and for research staff.

Staff development includes funds aimed at enhancing the training of college faculty and staff in assessment issues and methods--e.g., travel for faculty and staff to attend assessment conferences or visits to colleges with successful assessment programs; honoraria for outside consultants and experts to conduct on-campus presentations and workshops.

Goods and services include purchase of library resources on assessment, assessment tests, and printing of assessment newsletters.

Other includes project funds which could not be identified specifically in terms of the existing expenditure categories.

Budget analysis courtesy of Loretta Seppanen

Format of Institutional Plan Summaries

Colleges were asked to follow a particular format in their final plans, addressing a series of questions designed to elicit a full and accurate picture of their 1990-91 assessment process (see Appendix B). For the purposes of this report, the summary for each college includes the following elements drawn from the full plans:

* The college name, assessment liaison/s, and his/her SCAN phone number (liaisons being the contact person/s designated at each college for assessment activities and information-sharing)
* A brief overview of self-defined highlights of the assessment plan
* A listing of the broad goals, major activities (completed, current, and/or planned), and significant questions being addressed this year
* An indication of currently planned data collection efforts for 1990-91 not described earlier in the summary
* A description of the faculty development activities underway or planned as part of the overall assessment efforts

Incentive Grant Progress Report Summary

Appendix C provides a narrative description and status report on a separate but related aspect of the institutional assessment activities in Washington community colleges: the eleven **assessment incentive grants** underway around the system. These grants were made in the spring of 1990, and in most cases the projects were begun prior to the development of the overall institutional assessment plans. Thus these projects are not necessarily linked explicitly, in their focus areas or goals, with the assessment plans defined for a given institution. However, the work being conducted in these projects is consistent with, and in many cases incorporated into, the overall college-wide assessment efforts at this point, and at several colleges work initiated in these incentive grants has led directly to ongoing work described in the assessment plans. The incentive grant projects continue to be formally separate from the overall college assessment program, and the projects will be reporting their results separately at the end of the 1990-91 academic year.

Institutional Assessment Plans:

Listings by College

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Bellevue	Joy Carey	334-2212

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Plan Highlights

*thorough, comprehensive plan, building on ongoing work
*focus on institutional, program, and classroom levels
*includes explicit emphasis on faculty development & training

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Institutional level--performance of student groups
2. Institutional level--general education outcomes assessment
3. Program level--Inter-Disciplinary Studies assessment
4. Classroom level-- classroom research projects
5. Faculty Development--training in classroom research & discussions of assessment-related issues

General Assessment Activities?

5 major components:
* Longitudinal tracking study of student success factors
* General education outcomes assessment
* Assessment of Inter-Disciplinary Studies
* Funding faculty classroom research projects
* Faculty training in classroom reseach and assessment overall

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[Excerpts from a longer list]
1. What are the characteristics of students who seem to do well (and not so well) in various types of courses?
2. What kinds of learning and assessment methods do BCC faculty consider most important and useful?
3. What is the impact of classroom research techniques on student learning?
4. How can we foster constructive faculty interactions around assessment-related topics?

Other Data collection?

* faculty survey of interest in outcomes assessment
* modifying IDS assessment instrument to allow pre-and post-testing
* writing portfolio pilot project with a focus on general education objectives

Faculty Development efforts?

*classroom-based research training workshop

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Big Bend	Mike Lang	664-1233

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Plan Highlights

* Enthusiastic task force; involvement of a number of faculty in discussions about student outcomes assessment and in the development of small-scale assessment projects

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Initiate an assessment movement which will sensitize staff toward the need to assess student outcomes.
2. Assist instructors in expanding their understanding and utilization of assessment techniques.
3. Begin to identify student outcome expectations at the department, divisional, and institutional levels.

General Assessment Activities?

* Task force has been meeting to identify ways to encourage broad-based involvement in assessment-related activities
* Department-based projects have been initiated or are being planned

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Evaluation of communication skills, quantitative reasoning skills, critical thinking skills, decision making skills, and societal skills
* How effective the institution is in teaching students
* Where our strengths and weaknesses lie in instruction and student services

Other Data collection?

*survey of vocational instructors regarding perceived outcome expectations
*bus./mgt.survey of former students & employers

Faculty Development efforts?

* winter quarter seminar to be held on campus
* some faculty will travel to other campuses and workshops during the course of the year

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Centralia	Beverley Butters	234-3433

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Plan Highlights

* Emphasis on building expertise, involvement, and support among faculty during 1990-91, along with a number of focused data-oriented projects
* Includes a component related to non-cognitive issues (student development)

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Educate the Assessment Steering Committee members and colleagues on aspects of assessment
2. Generate faculty involvement, enthusiasm and support
3. Clarify action plan for future

General Assessment Activities?

* Educating assessment steering committee through workshops, consultations, and other resources
* Development of local "library" of assessment materials
* Develop mini-grant process and fund projects

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[Excerpts from a longer list]
1. How do our transfer students perform?
2. How much student writing is required in selected college level courses?
3. What pct. of VoTech students are finding jobs related to training?
4. Do developmental courses prepare students for college course work?

In general, do our services, courses, and programs adequately serve students?

Other Data collection?

* writing survey
* vocational outcome survey

Faculty Development efforts?

* visits to other colleges
* workshops, invited speakers
* faculty survey of existing and needed assessment efforts

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Clark	William Jesse	534-1102

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Plan Highlights

* Developing baseline data with respect to longitudinal trends of student progress and achievement, particularly for specific student subgroups (e.g., developmental students)
* Beginning faculty development related to outcomes assessment to enhance faculty support and understanding of assessment activities

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Develop a data base for longitudinal studies concerning student outcomes
2. Introduce faculty to outcomes assessment and begin faculty development on the topic
3. Begin the first steps toward linking faculty outcomes assessment with the results of the longitudinal studies

General Assessment Activities?

* Assessment coordinator and research analyst hired to facilitate efforts
* Faculty assessment committee created

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* How our students progress through their college experience, focusing in particular on success rates and the effectiveness of developmental education programs (< 100 level courses)
* Clarifying connections/distinctions between teaching and learning

Other Data collection?

*survey of Clark alumni

Faculty Development efforts?

* Friday afternoon seminars on student learning

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Columbia Basin	Noel Commeree & Patty Garbrick	563-1011 x315 (Noel)/x367 (Patty)

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Plan Highlights

* Thorough review of current efforts, goals, and curricular offerings in 90-91, directed by a faculty-chaired and -oriented Steering committee

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Review and revise, if necessary, the institution's mission statement
2. Review and revise, if necessary, the associate degrees and certificates offered by the college
3. Review the Student Services function as it relates to institutional mission statement and student outcomes, for the purpose of enhancing student services opportunities
4. Review and identify student assessment information currently in place to determine how it will fit into the overall student outcomes plan

General Assessment Activities?

* Developing a working bibliography/resource library
* Steering committee following the Seattle Central model of working toward a learning outcomes grid that would reflect the college mission and be used to stimulate campus-wide discussions

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* What available data we already have on our students
* Define a core learning matrix of outcomes [similar to SCCC grid in format]
* Recruit faculty members interested in continuing work on the matrix

Other Data collection?

no

Faculty Development efforts?

* liaisons have visited colleges identified as assessment leaders

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Edmonds	Mary Lou Rozdilsky	721-1613

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Plan Highlights

* Emphasis on involving as many faculty and administrators as possible in overall assessment process using existing college structures
* Process driven and directed by faculty and faculty concerns
* Information from program review process helping to identify departmental assessment goals

Broad goals for 90-91?

Focus on two broad questions this year:

1. What learning goals (outcomes for students) do we want to assess?
2. How can we assess student learning?

General Assessment Activities?

* Currently funding two rounds of faculty-initiated assessment projects
* Small and active steering committee meeting regularly to sustain visibility for and interest in project
* Organizing small faculty interest groups--11 operating in Winter quarter, 1991

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Extend and deepen the conversation about assessment on our campus by involving as many people as possible in assessment activities
* Hope to integrate assessment activities into the culture of the campus

Other Data collection?

* faculty projects to be funded for winter and spring quarter--11 projects will be funded for winter and spring quarters in this first round of proposals

Faculty Development efforts?

* fall quarter faculty mini-conference on outcomes assessment
* departmental retreats and workshops related to outcomes assessment

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Everett	Don Erickson	474-9211

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Plan Highlights

* Faculty involvement and control a major priority
* Balance of short-term mini-grant faculty projects, institutional data-gathering activities, and long-term planning activities

Broad goals for 90-91?

* Provide faculty with experience in outcomes assessment through design and implementation of funded short-term projects
* Conduct some pilot studies with students at entry to and exit from the college
* Enhancing knowledge base through development of library collection and conferences
* Explore options for long-term planning process related to assessment

General Assessment Activities?

* Faculty-initiated projects funded by mini-grants
* Pilot projects of intake process for new students and satisfaction of graduates to help clarify student issues related to educational entry and exit

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* How does our intake process for new students affect our delivery of educational services?
* What is the level of satisfaction among our graduates with our delivery of educational services?
* What direction do we want outcomes assessment to take over the long term?
* How can we develop greater faculty awareness and tap existing faculty expertise on issues related to learning outcomes assessment?

Other Data collection?

* Ad hoc studies to support individual faculty projects

Faculty Development efforts?

* Mini-grant projects
* Ad hoc faculty group meeting in Fall quarter
* General faculty workshop held in January 1991 to establish Faculty Task Force on assessment
* All-faculty workshop planned for Fall 1991

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Grays Harbor	Mark Reisman	433-1262

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Plan Highlights

*Emphasis on reviewing existing data sources & information
*Linking plan to recent self-study and planning process
*Taking a focused approach to several specific areas rather than global
*Includes some vocational programs as well

Broad goals for 90-91?

*Focus on issues and areas that can promote more and better student learning
*Increase general understanding of outcomes assessment and its potential for the improvement of teaching and learning
*Enhance the College's institutional research function to address questions of student learning outcomes

General Assessment Activities?

* Funding a variety of specific projects submitted by faculty and/or departments
*Creating an Outcomes Assessment Task Force
*Developing expertise through literature review and conference attendance

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

*better understand the positive benefits of outcomes assessment
*how to effectively design, implement and evaluate research/assessment projects
*increase information available to departments with respect to student learning related to their programs

Other Data collection?

*13 specific faculty/department-designed projects for 1990-91

Faculty Development efforts?

*through Outcomes Assessment Task Force and the small-scale project funding process

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Green River	Claudia Questo	254-1011 x206

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Plan Highlights

* Process on hold, but continues to be driven and controlled by faculty

Broad goals for 90-91?

[Impossible to say at this point due to contract dispute]

General Assessment Activities?

* Faculty coordinator and assessment committee members have spent some time (and travel) in educating themselves about assessment issues and approaches
* Planning strategies for initiating assessment process should contract dispute be settled

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

Other Data collection?

no

Faculty Development efforts?

* none beyond coordinator and some members of committee due to college situation

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Highline	Mary Odem	374-1305

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Plan Highlights

*Effective teaching & learning a key element
*Emphasis on indicators of student success & effectiveness of support services

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Learning about the purpose and value of student outcomes assessment
2. Increased development of faculty expertise in assessment methods
3. Clarifying student learning needs and goals
4. Developing and maintaining interest in the overall assessment process

General Assessment Activities?

* Some orientation meetings have occurred, & assessment task force has been formed
* Compiling information on what student data is already available on campus
* Plan to fund a range of faculty assessment projects for winter and spring quarters

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[tentative--some examples]
* Students' educational goals and plans
* Needs for more effective support services
* Learning and teaching styles that contribute to student success
* Needs of various populations
* How well is the college serving students?
* How to best predict "at risk" students?

Other Data collection?

not defined at present

Faculty Development efforts?

* developing bibliographic resources related to assessment

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Lower Columbia	Don Fuller	239-3425

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Plan Highlights

* "Grassroots" evolution of the shape and direction of the plan activities, with strong faculty leadership
* Variety of approaches, both broad and specific in focus, being undertaken

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Developing a set of agreed-upon purposes, most particularly in core or general education requirements
2. Testing the efficacy of our existing or experimental curricula
3. Teach ourselves about major developments in assessment and the improvement of curricula to support improved performance of our students

General Assessment Activities?

3 broad areas:

* Reassessment of purposes (core competencies, gen. ed. requirements, etc.)
* Specific course improvement and assessment projects
* Professional development in assessment topics

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[selected from a much longer list of both broad and specific objectives]

* Commitment to a set of realizable purposes for our curriculum
* More thoughtful analysis of our definitions of success
* Nature and level of proficiency of writing among transfer-oriented students
* Impact of interdisciplinary courses on multiple dimensions of student outcomes
* Key competencies needed for students seeking degrees in industrial technologies

Other Data collection?

* math preparedness in science majors
* Integrative Studies students
* followup study of developmental students
* computer applications in teaching accounting

Faculty Development efforts?

* classroom research seminar
* use of SGID methodology
* travel to workshops/conferences
* visits to innovative colleges

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
North Seattle	Fran Schmitt & Gail Wilkie	446-3725 & 446-3694

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Plan Highlights

* Faculty-driven focus on learning outcomes of degree programs
* Linked to ongoing reformulation of general education and AA/AAS degree programs
* Cross-disciplinary dialogue begun at spring workshop & continued in meetings in fall quarter

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Clarifying the college's general education learning goals
2. Defining methods for teaching these general education skills, at least in part by piloting measures for assessing them

General Assessment Activities?

* Clarifying college's general education learning goals & defining methods for teaching/assessing skills associated with those goals
*Funding specific faculty projects focussed on gen ed skills assessments

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* What goals do faculty have for their students?
* How do faculty know what kind of progress their degree-seeking students are making toward those goals?
* What assessment methods are currently in use across the college?
* How to stimulate cross-disciplinary dialogue on teaching/learning and outcomes assessment
* How to increase faculty commitment to improving learning through assessment process?

Other Data collection?

specific projects to be funded still being developed for review

Faculty Development efforts?

* representation at national conferences on assessment
* all-faculty workshops to build consensus on gen ed outcomes & skills assessments

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Olympic	Emmet Hoynes & Alberta May	356-4689/356-7198

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Plan Highlights

* Linked to college strategic planning process
* Assessment project proposal process
* Enthusiasm of faculty and staff currently involved in assessment activities

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Develop the structures and processes which will invite ever broadening participation in outcomes assessment, provide opportunities for faculty and staff growth and development, and promote student outcomes as a means for college renewal.
2. Gather information on selected students and programs to provide data for decision making, to measure student learning, and to promote communication and information sharing among programs.

General Assessment Activities?

* Assessment task force active in building campus interest through assessment project funding, hosting campus workshops, and developing a statement of principles to guide outcomes assessment activities

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[some examples]
* What are basic student competencies in writing, critical thinking, and computational skills?
* What types of assignments, tests, and instructional methods improve student skills?
* Do occupational students find jobs in their chosen fields? Do the occupational programs teach students the skills necessary for the workplace?

Other Data collection?

* student writing and critical thinking
* reading & computational skills assessment
* occupational programs & job placement
* nursing program

Faculty Development efforts?

* outside consultant on integrating outcomes assessment into college strategic planning process

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Peninsula	Paula Doherty	227-1276

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Plan Highlights

* Opportunities for faculty-initiated assessment projects geared to student learning
* Structured discussions among faculty and administrators about student learning & outcomes

Broad goals for 90-91?

[among others]

1. Measure institutional performance by utilizing existing student data more effectively
2. Develop a methodology for longitudinal evaluation of student performance
3. To foster an awareness by and continuing discussion among faculty as to those competencies or "literacies" which characterize general education
4. To encourage and support faculty projects which address teaching/learning concerns

General Assessment Activities?

* Extensive inventory of existing campus data-gathering efforts related to students & student learning
* Number of specific faculty-driven projects being funded for 90-91
* Series of efforts aimed at involving students in overall process, gathering their input

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[some examples]

* Are our students learning what they expect to learn?
* Are our students learning what we expect them to learn?
* What are the significant contributing factors in the "stopout" phenomenon?

Did our students' experiences at Peninsula contribute to an improved quality of life? What would they have changed about those experiences?

Other Data collection?

focus areas approved to date:

*chemistry
* business systems computers
* technology courses

Faculty Development efforts?

* fall faculty offcampus retreat helped begin assessment conversation among faculty (70% attended)

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Pierce	Ann Bathum & George Cummings	346-6574

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Plan Highlights

* Process has helped focus internal discussions about institutional effectiveness issues
* Emphasis on studying and improving the W (writing-intensive) Course Program
* Information about assessment opportunities disseminated to faculty has been well-received

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Educating the Assessment Committee and the entire faculty about assessment issues
2. Gaining faculty support for and involvement in assessment activities
3. Implementing assessment processes in 3 areas defined as primary by the College's current goals and needs (see Assessment Activities)

General Assessment Activities?

* Writing assessment, both in regular English courses and in W courses
* Student retention and performance in Math 101
* Evaluation of student progress at Pierce extension sites (Puyallup, McChord, Ft. Lewis)

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* What kind of writing do students do, especially in W courses?
* Do course placement recommendations really make any difference in student success?
* What factors area associated with students who fail to complete Math 101?

Other Data collection?

Faculty Development efforts?

* Assessment committee reading and traveling to learn more about assessment
* classroom research seminars

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Seattle Central	Jack Bautsch	432-6947

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Plan Highlights

*Outgrowth of ongoing work funded initially by Title III
*Will continue to explore ways to assess learning goals defined by "Model of Student Learning" grid developed over past several years

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Continue to increase faculty involvment and commitment to improve teaching and learning within individual course and programs
2. Develop awareness and specific support systems for outcomes assessment within non-instructional areas of the college
3. Foster diverse approaches to outcomes assessment, and make those approaches available for use/adaptation by the entire college community

General Assessment Activities?

* Student Outcomes Task Force continues to meet biweekly
* Hiring faculty assessment coordinators to serve as catalysts for broader faculty involvement
* Work with Curriculum Review Committee to utilize Model of Student Learning in review process

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* The value and benefits of Coordinated Studies in helping students and faculty achieve the learnings identified in the Model of Student Learning
* What dimensions of the Model are most valuable to vocational students in their work, and what experiences contributed to their achievement of those dimensions
* Level of acceptance and implementation of learning outcomes assessment activities on campus

Other Data collection?

* evaluation of relative effectiveness of Coordinated Studies Program
* study of organizational climate re outcomes
* qualitative study of vocational programs

Faculty Development efforts?

* Faculty Colloquia on assessment efforts related to Model & links to curriculum change
* all-campus Assessment Workshop in spring

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Shoreline	Marie Rosenwasser	274-1651

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Plan Highlights

* Strong faculty enthusiasm for assessment projects and related activities
* Assessment newsletter "Outlook"
* Student interest and participation in projects, especially Portfolio project
* Training faculty in how to conduct program assessment

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Increase faculty understanding of and support for outcomes assessment as a means of strengthening teaching and learning
2. Increase our capability for instutional research so that outcomes assessment begun this year might be continued
3. Research the relationship between students' initial testing/placement and subsequent performance
4. Extend initial Portfolio Assessment project to include the assessment of other general education outcomes

General Assessment Activities?

* Create cross-discipline faculty teams to explore classroom research and share results
* Establish portfolio evaluation teams of English and business faculty to study the writing of business students relative to students in general
* Faculty member reassigned as outcomes assessment research coordinator
* Incorporating outcomes assessment into accreditation self-study process
* Increasing faculty understanding and acceptance of assessment link to teaching/learning
* Ongoing faculty training in kinds and uses of outcomes assessment through campus forums, professional development workshops, and an assessment newsletter

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[among others]
* Differences in student learning across kinds of class and with various modes of instruction
* Whether, and if so, how, students use writing to achieve Shoreline's 20 general education learning outcomes
* More about using various assessment methods and their relative values in improving instruction
* Whether or not students follow placement recommendations, and the consequences of their decisions

Other Data collection?

* "ASSET correlation study"
* differences between developmental English students' and remedial business English students' knowledge of language usage and reading

Faculty Development efforts?

* training for faculty coordinator
* classroom research seminar and results-sharing
* how to do portfolio assessment
* role writing plays in student learning across disciplines

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Skagit Valley	Jim Sorensen/Trish Barney/Mike Witmer	542-1227

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Plan Highlights

* Emphasis on general education clarification and assessment
* Development of faculty-oriented classroom assessment instruments
* Enthusiasm and expertise reflected in the assessment steering committee

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Provide feedback to classes and programs for the improvement of the teaching/learning process
2. Get faculty involved in the assessment of the teaching/learning process and the application of that information to the classroom
3. Do assessment at the program and institutional levels by examining institutional assessment issues and providing for institutional accountability

General Assessment Activities?

* General education
* Classroom outcomes and assessment
* Developmental skills outcomes assessment
* Institutional research and analysis

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Review and revision of general education curriculum
* Develop "faculty-friendly" assessment instruments
* Identifying student success in developmental classes and beyond
* Develop baseline data for institutional outcomes assessment

Other Data collection?

* one probable focus: learning communities and interdisciplinary studies area
* mini-grant focus areas yet to be determined

Faculty Development efforts?

* faculty member sent to Alverno College for intensive assessment training
* on-campus workshops related to assessment & classroom research

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
South Puget Sound	Greg Gurske	329-1231

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Plan Highlights

* Dialogue and debate about general education goals and degree offerings
* Use of retreats and other out-of-the-ordinary events valuable in getting people's attention
* Funding frees faculty up for involvement without slighting time spent with students and teaching

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Learning about and integrating into practice classroom research techniques as assessment and teaching tools
2. Clarifying the college's expectation as to the general education skills expected of students completing with a degree or certificate

General Assessment Activities?

* Assessment planning committee meeting on a regular basis
* Campus workshops on outcomes assessment overall, classroom research, and general education goals

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Better use of the value of classroom research techniques and its potential for improving teaching and learning
* Better understanding of general education goals and a sense of relevant measurement criteria for those goals

Other Data collection?

not planned at this time

Faculty Development efforts?

* in-service workshops & retreats

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
South Seattle	Robert Joe Hester	628-5353

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Plan Highlights

* Using current personnel as much as possible so that those most closely connected to the project will have a firm grasp of the social/institutional environment

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Entire campus community will become aware of the issues surrounding assessment outcomes and how they relate to the teaching/learning process
2. Resource bank of materials including information about existing programs on campuses throughout the state and across the nation will be established

General Assessment Activities?

* Acquiring library resources and specialized materials related to outcomes assessment
* Hiring person to serve as ongoing internal consultant to assessment process

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

*Determine types of outcomes assessment activities most appropriate for South Seattle faculty and student populations
*Gather faculty input on the development of assessment goals, processes and projects

Other Data collection?

not at this time

Faculty Development efforts?

* on-campus workshops and travel to assessment-related conferences and institutions with model assessment programs
* acquisition of assessment resource materials

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Spokane	Lynn West	271-8008

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Plan Highlights

* "Revolving campus teams" a success so far, with over 100 faculty, staff, & students involved to date
* Variety of communication methods re assessment issues & activities, including a regular newsletter, quarterly compilation of information, and a video!

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Learn as a campus just what learning outcomes assessment means in general and for us as a college in particular
2. Inventory outcomes strategies and measurements currently in place on our campus
3. Begin a process for identifying learning outcomes for our students (knowledge, skills, and attitudes)

General Assessment Activities?

* Student "Learning about Learning" class
* Cross-campus conversations involving Revolving Campus Teams
* Compilation of information from Campus Team discussions/meetings
* Campus Outcomes Roundtable discussions

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Tracing a pattern of student success
* Kinds of content, skills and attitudes necessary for success in future endeavors, and the extent to which students are learning these outcomes

Other Data collection?

* interviewing faculty, staff and students on learning strategies and proposed outcomes
* interviewing employers and baccalaureate reps re SCC student success

Faculty Development efforts?

* workshops and retreats
* travel to conferences and college leaders in assessment

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Spokane Falls	Bryan West	784-3607

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Plan Highlights

* Efforts led by respected and results-oriented faculty and administrators
* College Colloquia broadened to include focus on student learning outcomes discussions
* Involves full spectrum of students, full- and part-time faculty, and administrators

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Continue and extend campus discussions about assessment and its connection to teaching/ learning
2. Develop local expertise and resources in assessment issues and methodlogy
3. Initiate variety of pilot data-gathering efforts on student learning outcomes

General Assessment Activities?

* Formal focus and emphasis on involving part-time faculty in overall process
* Develop an Outcomes Assessment Resource center
* Involve students in overall process through a variety of activities
* Core faculty group meeting to provide overall leadership, with input from a broader Task Force

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Writing outcomes and students' achievement of these outcomes
* Appropriate computational skill outcomes and suggested means for measuring these outcomes
* Students' perceptions of community college general education competencies and ways of achieving these competencies
* Role of part-time faculty in overall assessment process

Other Data collection?

* computational skill outcomes
* current students' attitudes & perceptions of their educational experience
* identifying "quality check points"

Faculty Development efforts?

* College Colloquia discussions of learning outcomes assessment
* fall "kickoff" faculty forum on assessment
* ongoing informal meetings throughout year

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Tacoma	Frank Garratt	548-5022

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Plan Highlights

* Broad base of faculty involvement through existing Gen. Ed. & Outcomes Assessment Committee
* Group of faculty interviewed about their expectations for transfer students & how best to link assessment data to institutional effectiveness focus

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Faculty involvement in the overall assessment process
2. Initial pilot data-gathering related to learning outcomes areas identified by the General Education & Outcomes Assessment Committee
3. Evaluate relative utility of various assessmen methods

General Assessment Activities?

* Building strong base of faculty support and involvement
* Faculty-led subcommittees of GEOAC group now focusing on specific projects
* Writing assessment, especially with respect to 1) ESL & 2) English 101
* Math assessment, including interviewing students re Math Lab experiences

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[among others]

* Is there a demonstrable and satisfactory difference between the writing abilities of English 101 and graduating students?
* How well does the college prepares its transfer students?
* Are student portfolios an appropriate method for assessing student writing, and perhaps other outcomes related to general education?
* How might current assessment efforts be integrated into overall assessment of institutional effectiveness?

Other Data collection?

* transfer student assessment
* identifying appropriate pre-test of entering students' knowledge

Faculty Development efforts?

* series of fall workshops on assessment- related topics
* travel to existing assessment leader sites
* major faculty dev. workshop in spring

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Walla Walla	Myles Anderson	629-4262

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Plan Highlights

*Funding of eight mini-grant projects has helped increase visibility and interest in outcomes assessment activities
*High level of faculty/staffparticipation in discussions around assessing outcomes & using data

Broad goals for 90-91?

Foster an attitude at Walla Walla which values
1) charting progress
2) paying atention to performance (process and results)
3) getting outside ourselves for gathering evidence about the teacher-student relationships which will lead to affirming great teaching, maintaining a solid curriculum and making sound academic policies

General Assessment Activities?

* Non-returning student followup study
* Developmental education outcomes study
* Mini-grant projects, including projects studying writing, math competencies, minority student transfer rates, the impact of supplemental instruction and study skills training on academic achievement, etc.

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

Broadly speaking, the level of student success and performance in a variety of specific areas and competencies as a way of validating and/orreviewing major aspects of the curriculum and goals of the college

Other Data collection?

Faculty Development efforts?

* fall faculty workshop on assessment with Peter Ewell
* publishing the results of current studies for college-wide review

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Wenatchee Valley	Marythea Grebner/Nancy Howard/ Carol McMillan	685-2532

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Plan Highlights

*Developing small work groups to broaden involvement in assessment activities
*Arranging forums to share results or work-in-progress with whole campus
*Pursuing approaches individually tailored to main and satellite campuses
*Examining contribution of student support services to student learning

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Explore and experiment with a variety of assessment approaches
2. Increase campus awareness of college learning goals for students

General Assessment Activities?

* All-day collegewide meeting helped produce general consensus on 5 broad aspects of "holistic, integrated learning":
1) communication
2) positive self-image
3) skills/competencies
4) global or world view
5) lifelong learning
* Funding to be available for assisting faculty with individual and/orgroup assessment projects

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

* Are students synthesizing the learning they acquire into an integrated world view?
* Are students progressing toward their stated goals?

Other Data collection?

yet to be determined at this point

Faculty Development efforts?

* developing file of in-house teaching innovation abstracts
* regular, ongoing discussions related to teaching/learning and assessment

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Whatcom	William Christopher & Sara Julin	738-2170

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Plan Highlights

*Linking the outcomes assessment efforts to accrediting self-study process

Broad goals for 90-91?

*Educate and inform all interested faculty regarding student learning assessment goals and uses
*Develop a broad-based collegial support for student learning outcomes assessment
*Define a college policy to guide assessment activities
*Encourage as many faculty as possible to be actively engaged in assessment projects defined by their own interests and concerns

General Assessment Activities?

*Establish collegewide assessment steering committee and faculty sub-committee
*Appoint a faculty chair to provide faculty leadership in college assessment activities
*Initiate preliminary data collection with specific student groups, including recent graduates and current students
*Provide continuing support for institutional efforts related to student outcomes, especially with respect to writing skills

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

*Student satisfaction with college programs and services
*Activities related to student success
*Ideas for further research/assessment efforts
*Establish a method for sharing ideas and promoting a faculty-centered student outcomes approach to institutional improvement
*Implement strategies that enhance student success in and out of the classroom
*Develop a strong commitment to faculty reseach efforts designed to improve student success

Other Data collection?

*1989-90 graduate survey
* current student survey (1990-91)
*vocational follow-up survey (1989-90)

Faculty Development efforts?

*conferences/workshops and consultants
*faculty-initiated assessment projects

SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS: DECEMBER, 1990

College	Liaison	Phone Number
Yakima Valley	Don Hughes	558-2386

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Plan Highlights

*Attempting to involve as many faculty as possible; seem to be gaining support and interest
*Plan is broad-based and provides program development by a variety of campus constituents

Broad goals for 90-91?

1. Gain significant faculty support and participation
2. Gather preliminary data
3. Increase total campus awareness of the outcomes assessment issue
4. Become well informed of national and state assessment-related efforts

General Assessment Activities?

*Establishing faculty steering committee composed of broad spectrum of college
*Assessment of Living/Learning Community
*Pre- and post-testing utilizing ASSET
*Student anthology of good writing & compilation of "sourcebook" of good instruction ideas

What do you want to know/hope to learn?

[still in process]

Other Data collection?

possibly writing across the curriculum

Faculty Development efforts?

*faculty involved in incentive grant have traveled to conferences and gathered other information about assessment methods

APPENDIX A:
1990-91 GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The Higher Education Coordinating Board has recommended that the Washington system of public higher education develop performance evaluation programs to: 1) meet the state's need for accountability and increased educational quality; 2) provide a means for institutional self-evaluation and improvement. The state four-year institutions received funding for both accountability and institutional improvement; the community college system initially received money to meet the accountability requirement through system-level research efforts. Through the 1990 supplemental budget process, an additional $1.6 million, or $60,000 per community college, has been allocated to address at a local level the goal of institutional self-evaluation and improvement through the assessment of student learning.

In an effort to provide guidance and support for these campus-based assessment projects, the WACC Student Outcomes Task Force has defined a set of guidelines for the development of Institutional Assessment Plans, including: 1) a series of potential questions to be addressed in an institutional assessment program, 2) some examples of current projects related to these questions, 3) general suggestions for implementing a successful outcomes assessment program, and 4) a brief selected bibliography of assessment-related resources.

These guidelines are designed to be a starting point for an ongoing campuswide conversation about institutional outcomes assessment activities. As you move forward in that discussion and your overall planning process, you are strongly encouraged to utilize the State Board staff--in particular, Bill Moore (SCAN 321-8296) or Loretta Seppanen (SCAN 234-3685)--to help your campus assessment team think through and design the Assessment Plans.

ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The design and implementation of a comprehensive institutional assessment program does not involve anything particularly mysterious or complex; it does, however, take time, energy and commitment on the part of the entire college community. Seen as a whole, institutional assessment can also be a large and overwhelming process, and is often avoided because of its apparent difficulty. The approach taken in these guidelines is to break the overall process down into discrete steps in the form of a series of fundamental questions about the educational mission of the college. It is not likely that a comprehensive institutional assessment program can be put into place with the time or funding available for 1990-91; rather, the expectation is that college faculty and administrators will collaborate to define the question area/s most immediately important to them and attempt to achieve some kind of reasonable consensus on initial responses.

These questions, and some examples of the ways specific institutions have addressed each area, are provided below. These examples are by no means comprehensive, but

should give you some idea of how colleges around the state have taken the first steps toward establishing institutional outcomes assessment programs. The Task Force hopes that these examples will facilitate, not constrain, your thinking about possible assessment directions for your college in 1990-91 and beyond.

1. CLARIFYING GOALS

What is our college intending to accomplish? What are the learning goals we have for our students? More specifically, what should our students know or be able to do when they graduate from or leave our institution?

Defining these goals means determining the educational outcome dimensions that are most significant and appropriate for your college. For the goal statements at this step to be most functional for the overall assessment process, they should:

- explicate the purpose/mission of the college
- be developed across several organizational levels
- describe outcomes or results, not processes or treatments
- be measurable in some fashion
- establish targets for excellence as well as minimum standards

Many colleges may have defined these learning goals already through internal planning processes, perhaps tied to accreditation. If such work has been done, there is no need to repeat it for the purposes of an assessment program.

Examples

- Skagit Valley College is working through its existing general education committee to reach consensus on student outcomes related to general education, including researching the literature and other colleges, surveying students, and talking with representatives from business and industry.

- Seattle Central Community College has used a Student Outcomes Task Force to create and present to the College as a whole a "Model of Student Learning" defining outcomes categories and dimensions for all of their students. The model is currently being reviewed and discussed by the College community.

- Tacoma Community College is using a joint faculty/administrator General Education and Outcomes Assessment Committee to survey the literature, visit other campuses and model programs, attend conferences, and work with consultants in order to develop campus-level expertise in outcomes assessment as a way of laying the foundation for a comprehensive institutional assessment program.

- Lower Columbia College has a campus-wide faculty committee working to define and assess the outcomes of general education, create a coherent general education

curriculum based on those outcomes, and then pilot the assessment of the outcomes in a student "Capstone" experience.

2. DEFINING MEASURES

How will our college know how well our students are doing in achieving these outcomes? In other words, what measures and means will be used to collect assessment data? By whom? When?

This area addresses basic methodological concerns about assessment prior to collecting any outcome data, and may include reviewing existing measures to see how well they meet your needs, and/ortaking the time to develop specialized measurement tools tailored to your specific situation and outcome goals.

Examples

- Yakima Valley College has created a Liberal Arts and Sciences Student-Faculty Congress and is using this group to define and measure institutional and student expectations and results/outcomes.

- Spokane Falls Community College has formed a writing outcomes assessment team to identify the components of writing competence, pilot test the most promising methods of assessing these outcomes, and present a draft of the entire process to the general faculty.

- Centralia College has established faculty/administrator teams meeting to define criteria and possibly develop measures for assessing student competencies in reading, writing, and quantitative skills linked to the outcome of successful progress in academic and vocational programs.

3. ASSESSING OUTCOMES

What are students at our college learning? Are they achieving the outcome goals as we have defined them? How much progress are they making toward the specified learning goals? Alternatively, what are the consequences and/or outcomes of a community college education, goal-related or not?

This step begins the action, data-collection phase, gathering assessment information designed specifically to answer the outcome questions defined in question 1) or more generally to clarify the range of actual outcomes produced.

Examples

- Seattle Community Colleges are involved in a project analyzing student transcripts and surveying graduates in an effort to identify patterns of courses and abilities, knowledge and attitudes characterizing successful transfer students, moving toward a district-wide definition of transfer outcomes.

· Shoreline Community College, having previously constructed a general education plan defining twenty cross-curricular learning outcomes, is focusing on one specific aspect of those outcomes, using writing portfolios as a way of evaluating and tracking student writing proficiencies.

4. EVALUATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Are changes in student performance or learning related to the college experience, and if so, how? How effectively are we providing the learning opportunities presumed to be necessary for students to achieve these outcomes? Are our learning processes working the way we expect them to work?

This question involves evaluating or validating specific aspects of the college curriculum or experience to determine specific effects or influences on student outcomes.

Examples

· Pierce College is surveying faculty and assessing student writing samples to determine what impact, if any, its writing-intensive "W" courses have had on the writing abilities of students, and plans statewide distribution of a resource paper on their results.

· Tacoma Community College, through a Tutor Program Advisory Committee composed of faculty, administrators, and tutors, is evaluating a campus-wide tutoring program to determine its influence on student academic success.

· South Puget Sound Community College has established a joint faculty/administrator Student Success Strategies Committee and is surveying students and faculty attempting to define the basic skill needs and academic preparedness of students whose first language is not English, leading to an evaluation of the influence on student learning and satisfaction of a college-wide program designed for these students.

5. USING THE RESULTS

How will findings about our students' outcomes be used to focus specifically on improvement at our campus? How can the assessment efforts, from design to data collection to reporting results, be incorporated into the ongoing operation of the college?

This step is crucial if the assessment efforts are to be taken seriously and considered meaningful. In general, answers to these questions should:

*involve a wide range of people
*focus assessment on issues people care about
*choose appropriate levels of analysis
*provide small quantities of useful information rather than large amounts of data

*emphasize uses for improvement rather than punishment
*establish high expectations and meaningful incentives

Examples
Most of the preceding examples include components addressing this area as well, but are too early in their implementation to offer details. Nationally, institutions with successful assessment programs are using their results in a variety of significant ways:

· Alverno College in Wisconsin uses its assessment data in numerous ways, but perhaps most importantly as a means to increase students' success through feedback on their learning progress;

· Northeast Missouri State University uses its results primarily as a feedback tool for departments and programs as a way to focus on curricular successes and areas for improvement;

· Mt. Hood Community College in Oregon uses its assessment results in an overall internal strategic planning cycle, but also very successfully in external marketing efforts aimed at the local community.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

For colleges just beginning the process of thinking about outcomes assessment, following step-by-step the linear approach suggested by the preceding questions may work very well. On the other hand, how a college goes through the steps is not as important as making some kind of progress. The adage "Ready--Fire--Aim!" may well describe the most productive approach for your campus; that is, to struggle with the later questions about "what is?" and work backwards to the initial questions about goals. Regardless of how you approach the task, or the questions you ask first, outcomes assessment work around the state and the country suggests that the following elements seem to characterize successful programs:

· **Derived from a clear understanding of the college mission, its expectations of student progress, and its goal statements of desired student outcomes**

Meaningful assessment efforts need to be driven by a genuine quest for understanding students better--by real questions about students and the teaching/learning process in a particular college community.

· **Built on existing assessment data and procedures**

As Peter Ewell suggested at the May, 1990 Evaluation of Student Learning conference, one of the first steps in the assessment process is taking an inventory of

existing data and points of contact with students to see what is currently available and how well these natural contacts are being utilized. Given the difficulties in involving students in "add-on" assessment requirements, there is growing interest nationally in "embedded" assessment efforts: through the admissions and registration processes, through existing course testing and evaluation activities, and so on. Successful programs demonstrate a commitment to assessment while attempting to minimize the burden of extra tasks on both faculty and students.

· **Supported by top-level leaders, strong faculty involvement and broad participation by constituent groups**

At institutions with successful outcomes assessment activities, assessment is "everyone's business," not a project delegated to a single office or individual and then ignored. This kind of comprehensive approach requires both "top-down" and "bubble-up" efforts as well as active colloboration among faculty, adminstrators, and students.

· **Visible on campus; integrated into campus life and the mainstream of decisionmaking**

While this characteristic does not occur overnight, successful assessment programs become a positive and expected part of the campus culture, through ongoing efforts to help all segments of the community understand the role and value of assessment activities to themselves and to the institution. Through faculty workshops, meetings with student groups, articles in the campus newspaper or other media outlets, the benefits of a quality assessment program can be promoted--including, to paraphrase Pat Hutchings, the questions and issues raised, the conversations fostered, and the information gleaned from assessment efforts.

· **Based on multiple indices of multiple outcome areas**

Ultimately, the best assessment programs address a range of student learning outcomes with a variety of measurement approaches, acknowledging that college students and educational processes are not easily reduced to single dimensions.

· **Defined by context-specific issues for each individual institution**

Successful assessment programs are very much a reflection of the college or university culture in which they operate. A model program at one institution can generally not be transplanted without adaptation to another setting.

· **Established over a long period of time**

Quality assessment efforts take time--for planning, discussion, building consensus, developing ownership, gathering data, revising procedures, and so on. As Bonnie Neumann of San Diego State said at the May conference, assessment is an evolutionary , not a revolutionary , process.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND FORMATS

The legislature provided dollars in the 1990 supplemental budget for institutional assessment but added the requirement that "the state board for community college education shall approve college-specific assessment plans before releasing funds to the individual community colleges." To comply with this requirement, we are asking you to submit a Preliminary Assessment Plan to the State Board by June 15. A more complete Institutional Assessment Plan is requested by November 15, 1990, and a combination Progress Report/1991-92 Assessment Plan is requested by May 15, 1991.

1) The Preliminary Assessment Plan should be a concise (no more than two pages) document providing an overview of your plans for 1990-91, addressing the following questions in at most 2-3 paragraphs each:

A) What areas of student learning do you expect to address in your assessment efforts for 1990-91, and why?

B) How do you propose to approach the overall assessment planning process? (some examples: through an existing committee, the creation of a campuswide task force, a small work team drafting a proposal for a larger campus group, etc.) How do you see this planning process operating in 1990-91 and beyond?

C) Who (individuals or groups) will be involved in the assessment planning process on your campus? Describe your rationale for including them in the process.

D) Provide a description of how you anticipate spending the allocation based on your preliminary plans.

E) Designate a liaison person for the institutional assessment activities related to this allocation.

These Preliminary Plans will be evaluated on the following criteria:

* How well does the plan reflect an emphasis on student learning outcomes?
* How well does the planning process involve a broad range of groups from the campus community?

The plans will be reviewed prior to the June State Board meeting in order to seek the Board's approval for the appropriations. If questions arise in this review process, your institution's liaison person will be contacted for clarification and further information as needed.

2) The Institutional Assessment Plan, due November 15, 1990, is the formal document defining your overall plans for assessment related to institutional improvement. This report should reflect a thoughtful college-wide process addressing the following

questions, and also will offer an opportunity to make any appropriate revisions to the preliminary plan submitted in June:

A) What question areas (as defined in the attached guidelines) do you intend to address? Describe what you intend to do with the given area, and how you plan to approach it.

B) What is your timetable for addressing these questions?

C) With respect to any assessment data-gathering proposed for 1990-91, what do you want to know about your students, and what measurement procedures will you use?

D) As a result of the assessment activities funded by this allocation, what do you hope to learn about your students and/oryour college?

E) Based on what you think you may discover, what do you anticipate doing about it?

F) Please provide a budget for the 1990-91 institutional assessment activities related to this funding, including a description of anticipated in-kind contributions on the part of the college.

3) The Progress Report/1991-92 Assessment Plan will not be a lengthy report of data and analyses but will focus more broadly on your achievements related to institutional assessment and any revisions in your ongoing assessment plans for the following year. Additional details on the structure of this report will be provided at a later date, but the basic format will involve responses to three basic questions:

A) What exactly did you do in your 1990-91 assessment activities? Did you accomplish what you planned to accomplish?

B) What did you learn as a result of your 1990-91 assessment activities--about your students, your curriculum or other campus programs/services, about your college as a whole?

C) Based on what you've learned, what, if anything, are you doing about it? Ideally, what do you hope to do about it?

D) What are the next steps for your institutional assessment efforts for 1991-92?

E) Describe any changes to the budget breakdown proposed in the Fall plan for 1990-91. What are the budget implications of the 1991-92 plans defined in D)?

These reporting deadlines are short, especially given the nature of the planning process being undertaken. Please, note, however, that what is being expected by the

end of 1990-91 is **not** a fully operational comprehensive institutional outcomes assessment program, but a reasonable, good-faith effort toward planning and building such a program, with institutional improvement and student learning as the principal focus. The most important audience for your work in outcomes assessment, in 1990-91 and beyond, is your own campus community: faculty, administrators and students.

The reports described above will help the WACC Task Force and the State Board facilitate a climate in which you have some resources to pursue these areas in a thoughtful and institutionally meaningful way. These reports will be helpful to the Task Force and the State Board in understanding specific aspects of institutional assessment efforts, not to compile numbers and statistics. Please note that assessment scores are not being requested--only information on what you've learned in your planning/data gathering process.

EXPENDITURES

The overall intent of the $60,000 allocation is to **supplement** not **supplant** current institutional activities related to assessment. The list below represents expenditures which the Task Force believes follow or fail to follow that intent:

RECOMMENDED

***Faculty time:** Stipends for faculty involved in planning or implementing the college's assessment plan, or replacement costs for faculty on full or partial release time from teaching load to work on college assessment activities.

***Staff time:** Cost of hiring additional staff to carry out institutional assessment activities or replace existing staff redirected to institutional assessment activities.

***Consultants:** Fees for knowledgeable individuals to conduct faculty and staff development activities related to assessment.

***Travel:** Support for faculty and staff investigation of successful assessment efforts, such as attending conferences or visiting colleges with significant achievements in assessment.

***Materials:** Cost of improving the college's knowledge base about institutional assessment through publications; cost of conducting surveys or interviews or testing to evaluate student learning.

NOT RECOMMENDED

***Program improvements** : Activities that implement improvements in programs or services are more appropriately funded with quality enhancement dollars.

***Entry-level, basic skills testing:** Basic skills testing for the purpose of advising and placing individual students in particular courses may be funded with quality enhancement dollars.

***Equipment:** Equipment may be funded with your equipment allocation or quality enhancement dollars.

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Appendix B

Question Format

APPENDIX B:
QUESTION FORMAT FOR THE INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANS

[excerpted from a memo sent to each college's assessment liaison in October, 1990]

This outline represents an update and modification of the format defined in the original guidelines distributed last spring, designed to give us a clearer idea of the kinds of activities occurring related to assessment:

A) How would you characterize the broad goals for your institutional assessment-related efforts in 1990-91?

B) What specific activities (already completed, in process, or planned) are being pursued to achieve these goals?

C) With respect to any assessment data-gathering proposed for 1990-91, what do you want to know about your students, and what measures will you use?

D) As a result of the assessment activities (not just data-gathering) for 1990-91, what do you hope to learn about your students and/oryour college?

E) Based on what you think you may discover, what do you anticipate doing about it?

F) Please provide a budget for the 1990-91 institutional assessment activities related to this funding, including a description of anticipated in-kind contributions on the part of the college.

As a preface to formally addressing this outline in your plan, I also ask that you include a brief narrative summary, using the form attached to this memo. One of the purposes of this format is to provide an easy way to focus on highlights and concerns in synthesizing a "big picture" for the system from 27 different colleges, so I urge you to limit your comments to a page (you can use the back if you'd like!).

I also encourage you to include any background material that relates to or describes your assessment activities--workshop materials/handouts, newsletters, etc. I am trying to create a file of good examples of institutional assessment efforts so that I can share those ideas with other colleges around the system.

In general, I hope that somehow through the plan and supporting materials you can convey a sense of the impact any of these efforts may have had on your campus, and especially your faculty, to date--in particular, the faculty/staff enthusiasm assessment-related activities may have generated, if it exists. On the other hand, I neither encourage nor expect a "public relations piece"; I hope you take the critique portion seriously and give me an honest appraisal of how things stand at this point in time.

If you have any questions at all about the plan or this format, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Appendix C

Assessment Incentive Grant Projects

APPENDIX C:
ASSESSMENT INCENTIVE GRANT PROJECTS: FALL, 1990 STATUS REPORT & HIGHLIGHTS

Centralia College (Beverley Butters, Associate Dean for Assessment)

General focus: identifying basic reading skills necessary for successful completion of college level courses and evaluating effectiveness of current assessment and placement process

Specific highlights: survey of faculty on essential reading skills required from students; development and pilot-testing of local reading assessment instrument; tracking student performance over time based on initial placement recommendations

Lower Columbia College (Don Fuller, Dean of Instruction)

General focus: defining and assessing the outcomes of the College general education (Plan B) program

Specific highlights: faculty-conducted interviews with liberal arts and nursing faculty to identify exit-level competencies for the Associate degree; development of a "Curriculum Revitalization Report: Capstone Project" based on those interviews and follow-up discussions; continued campuswide discussion of the defined competencies and recommended curricular implications

Pierce College (Anne Bathum, English Department faculty)

General focus: assess what differences, if any, the writing-intensive (W) course requirement has had on students' writing abilities

Specific highlights: surveys of both faculty and students involved in W courses; extensive literature review of work nationally on W courses to define more clearly criteria for an effective program

Seattle Community College District (Julie Hungar, Vice Chancellor, Education and Administration)

General focus: identifying outcomes of community college education most instrumental in transfer students' success in four-year institutions, as well as the kinds of courses and college paths which lead to those outcomes

Specific highlights: collecting wide range of sucess indicators on student performance, along with information from students themselves, sampling students who transferred from Seattle community colleges to UW or Western Washington with 45 college level credits or an Associate degree and at least 30 college level credits

Shoreline Community College (Marie Rosenwasser, Vice President for Academic Affairs)

General focus: exploring the utility of student writing portfolios in terms of measuring student learning and improving teaching and learning

Specific highlights: sample of students submitting written work done for other classes throughout the year, to be evaluated in a secondary analysis; students meeting with portfolio advisors to receive feedback on their progress as writers and learners; English 101 outcomes and competencies have been reviewed and clarified

Skagit Valley College (Edna Kiel, Faculty Coordinator, General Education Committee)

General focus: establishing general education learning outcomes for all students at the College; generating curriculum guides to achieve these learning outcomes; designing faculty development opportunities to increase the variety of instructional modes in general education

Specific highlights: literature review on general education; campus workshops for faculty to stimulate discussion on general education outcomes; conference attendance and site visits; publication of internal newsletter on general education and outcomes assessment; surveys of former and current students

South Puget Sound Community College (Dorna Bullpitt, Associate Dean of Instruction)

General focus: evaluate effectiveness of the College's ESL programs in terms of student success and retention

Specific highlights: wide variety of data collected from and about ESL students; discussions held with ESL staff, instructors and students about strengths and weaknesses of the program; literature review conducted

Tacoma Community College (Priscilla Bell, Dean for Student Services)

General focus: evaluation of tutorial services program

Specific highlights: literature review of national work related to tutorial programs, and site visits to other programs in the state; surveys to identify "high risk" classes and surveys of faculty and tutors about tutoring issues

Tacoma Community College (Frank Garratt, Dean of Instruction)

General focus: student outcomes assessment with respect to general education, writing across the curriculum in particular

Specific highlights: developing local expertise through conference and workshop attendance, outside consultants, and planning retreats; surveys of faculty and students on attitudes about, and experiences with, assigned writing at the College; analysis of student writing samples, comparing beginning students with graduating sophomores

Yakima Valley (Dr. Vicki Mitchell, Associate Dean of Instruction)

General focus: increasing awareness of and expertise in assessment issues, particularly among Liberal Arts/Physical Sciences Division faculty, and piloting a variety of creative assessment approaches

Specific highlights: student writing anthology project; video evaluation of critical thinking skills; writing portfolio project; wide variety of campuswide discussions and meetings, with students included, on assessment-related issues

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